

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Blighted Linden Building Demolished To Make Way For Community Garden**

The Miller Building was demolished today to make way for a community garden for Linden McKinley STEM Academy students. Mayor Michael B. Coleman, who has championed healthy living, was joined by Superintendent Dr. Gene Harris, City Councilmember Priscilla Tyson, community leaders, business owners, and Linden McKinley students to demolish the Linden building. The demolition was funded with federal grant money from the Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

**“This is a tremendous opportunity for this community,” Mayor Coleman said. “We’re going to replace this vacant and abandoned eyesore with a community garden that will produce fresh, nutritious food for this neighborhood as well as valuable learning experiences for young people.”**

The former Miller Building, 2455 Cleveland Ave., represents a step forward to increase access to convenient, affordable, fresh produce by expanding food production, processing and distribution to the Greater Linden neighborhood. The site will house additional community gardens, equipment, such as hoop houses, to extend the growing season, and a learning laboratory for Linden McKinley High School students.

Columbus City Schools is working closely with Dr. Ross MacDonald, research scientist at The Ohio State University, to create a framework for classroom curriculum regarding local food systems. The new garden as well as the existing community garden at the adjacent New Harvest Café will provide students with educational opportunities and hands-on internships to complement classroom experience.

**“We are very pleased to partner with New Harvest, the City of Columbus, and Dr. MacDonald to create an outstanding opportunity for students to learn not only in the classroom but in an outside environment,” said Dr. Harris “Students will be part of a community building effort that provides the training and experience for jobs in urban agriculture in the future.”**

New Harvest has successfully expanded its community gardens, established strong connections with residents, master gardeners, community leaders, area non-profits, and others to create a team of committed individuals and organizations. To kick off this spring’s planting season, Councilwoman Priscilla Tyson announced that \$5,000 will be distributed to community gardens through the Foundation for Active Living.

**“This is an investment in the health of our residents and the well being of our neighborhoods,” said Councilmember Tyson, chair of the Recreation and Parks Committee for Columbus City Council. “The redevelopment of this site and the creation**

**of community gardens preserves green space and fits perfectly into the mission of the Institute for Active Living which encourages residents to experience the recreational benefits of gardening.”**

Other colleagues and partners involved in the project include Columbus Public Health Commissioner Teresa C. Long; Development Director Boyce Safford, Casey Hoy, Kellogg Endowed Chair of Ohio State University’s Agroecosystems Management Program; Steve Bosserman, president of Bosserman and Associates, Inc.; Susan Shockey, Ohio State University’s Franklin County extension educator; Danny Popp, chairperson of the North Linden Area Commission; and Ohio Rep. Carlton Weddington of Columbus.